Proxmire Asks GAO Probe Post 7/13/74

Check of U.S. Gifts Sought

Associated Press

The General Accounting Office has been asked to investigate all gifts from the U.S. government to foreign heads of state during the last 14 years, says Sen. William Proxmire (D-Wis.).

President Nixon's recent gift of a $2 million helicopter to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat "is just the latest example of a long string of gifts courtesy of the beleaguered American taxpayer," Proxmire said Thursday.

He said he asked the GAO to seek information from the CIA, White House, State Department, Defense Department and Agency for International Development, the foreign aid outlet.

Proxmire wants a list of all the gifts from Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon worth more than $500 each given to any foreigner or U.S. citizen.

The list would include a description of the gift, its cost, its recipient, the date it was given, how it was paid for and the purpose.

"It appears that many gifts have been given out of the special confidential fund of $2.1 million at the Department of State," Proxmire said. The Sadat helicopter, however, "is too expensive for that fund. It is possible that it will be funded out of AID appropriations or from the military budget as a part of military aid," he said.

The GAO has also been asked to study the practice of private corporations donating to the government "some gifts such as luxury automobiles" that then are transferred to a foreign recipient, such as in the case of Soviet party chief Leonid Brezhnev.